

17 September 1979

MEMORANDUM FOR: NIO/W

SUBJECT : Alert Memorandum Caveat

1. As you are aware, the problems of coordinating the recent AM on Afghanistan were significant. Nor were they unique to that memo. Unfortunately, the importance of timeliness precludes a methodical approach as is the case in NIE drafting; however, the agency reps expect that kind of treatment (it should be remembered that the responsibility for failure is yours, not theirs). For example, State wanted to rehash a second draft after DIA had commented. Furthermore, the judgments tend to get more and more watered down as the coordination process proceeds.

2. I think the DCI's responsibilities and obligations are clear in DCID 1/5. He is unquestionably personally responsible for warning the President. He is also responsible for the content of the Alert Memorandum. While I would certainly not advocate that we forego participation by other agencies, I do recommend changing the wording of the standard caveat. The existing wording precedes the recommended amendment:

*The Alert Memorandum is an interagency publication issued by the Director of Central Intelligence on behalf of the Intelligence Community. Its purpose is to ensure that senior policymakers are aware of the serious implications for US interests of impending potential developments. It is not a prediction that these developments will occur. This memorandum has been coordinated at the working level by CIA, DIA, NSA, and State/INR.

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P.S. I recommend this matter not be brought before the Warning Working Group for debate. They are not responsible for issuing a warning; you are.

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